

24th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

9 – 27 September 2013

Joint NGO Statement

**International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
(EAFORD)
Geneva International Center for Justice (GICJ)**

This Joint oral statement on Palestine was delivered by Ms. Daniela Dönges under Agenda Item 6, on 23 September 2013. She criticized the failure of Israel to appear before the UPR Working Group in January 2013, which created a dangerous precedent for the Universal Periodic Review mechanism and the respect for human rights worldwide. She called to consider the 29 October as a definitive date for the Working Group to conduct its review, with or without the presence of the country concerned.

No Concessions to Political Pressure

Mr. President, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is one of the most important mechanisms of the Human Rights Council (HRC) for the promotion and protection of Human Rights and must be taken seriously. The failure of Israel to appear before the Working Group for its review in January created a dangerous precedent for the UPR mechanism and the respect for human rights worldwide.

Such an abstention from the UPR was more than a mere extension of the review session. It must instead be seen as part of a persistent non-cooperation against the fundamental obligation of any member of the United Nations and cannot be tolerated. Regrettably, until this day there is no change in this policy. Instead of submitting to international law Israel has called this Council a “political tool and convenient platform” and linked further collaboration with political demands such as the attempt to undermine item 7 on this Council’s agenda.

Such rhetoric is obviously part of a playing-for-time-strategy, which gives Israel the necessary space to continue its creeping annexation and illegal occupation of Palestinian land, further undermining the fundamental human rights of Palestinians as well as their right to self-determination.

This strategy is reflected in significantly increased settlement activities since the General Assembly’s decision to recognize Palestine as non-member state, characterized by an exploding number of house demolitions and massive evictions in 2013 and, most recently, the adoption of the Praver Plan, which will result in the forced displacement of up to 70,000 Arab Bedouins.

Mr. President, a persistent non-cooperation of a State with the UPR must have consequences. Any delay to take action, any concessions to political pressure, will seriously undermine the credibility of this Council as well as the effectiveness of the UPR.

In accordance with the Working Group's resolution adopted in January 2013 we call on this Council to consider the 29 October as a definitive date for the Working Group to conduct its review, with or without the presence of the country concerned.

Thank you.



Daniela Dönges

Intern/EAFORD